



The Journal

Vol. 29

No. 1

www.dcmilitary.com/journal/

January 12, 2017

NSAB's Year in Review: A Look Back at 2016



***Take Our
Readership
Survey***

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 William Phillips

Commander's Corner

**By Capt. Marvin Jones
Commanding Officer, NSA Bethesda**

NSAB Family – Happy New Year and welcome back! I hope your holidays were safe, memorable and rewarding. This issue of The Journal is a special one, for two very important reasons. First, as the installation's "Year in Review" issue, it helps us reflect on some of our most special moments and events of 2016 that exemplify why being a part of this team is such an incredible honor and privilege, as well as an unique and enriching experience. As you flip through the pages, I trust that you'll see events that bring back some fond memories. And if you're new to our NSAB family, I hope these photos give you a vision for the year to come. Looking back over 2016, I fondly remember some remarkable moments. I proudly recall NSAB's MWR program successfully achieving accreditation, the Fleet & Family Support Center receiving their first certification visit with minimal findings, and the Child Development Center receiving 100% on their 2016 higher headquarters inspection, an immense accomplishment in maintaining their 5-year National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. I remember the strong partnership forged by our Army and Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response programs and their efforts in planning installation-wide events together such

as "Strike-Out Sexual Assault" at the Bowling Center. The Family Health and Fitness Fair and MWR-sponsored events like Eggstravaganza, Breakfast with Santa, Fall Fest, the Freedom 5k Run/Walk, Bike to Work Day, the 5th Annual Army-Navy Flag Football game, Thanksgiving Day meals at the Warrior Café – these activities conjure up a huge smile as I reminiscence on them. And who could forget the Gary Sinise Foundation's Invincible Spirit Festival and the multitude of exciting events and happenings hosted by our fabulous USO Warrior and Family Center? All of these come to mind as key contributors to an unforgettable and successful 2016. Our mission accomplishments were underscored as construction began on a new 650-car parking garage and the installation received a new cooling tower structure. Additionally, the Green Road Project was dedicated in September, providing Wounded Warriors an outdoor space in which they can heal through meditation and enjoy the tranquility of the outdoors. NSAB's Security Department held its 2nd annual National Night Out, the Navy Gateway Inns and Suites commemorated its first complete year of operations and in November they celebrated Navy Lodging Appreciation Day along with the Fisher House.

Lastly, the Bethesda Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation project steered the installation of Ground Source Heat Pump systems to some NSAB buildings, lessening our dependence on external heat sources and resulting in reduced energy costs. With so many exciting things emerging in 2016, I can't wait to see what amazing accomplishments we will achieve in 2017! The other reason why this issue is special is because it offers you, our NSAB staff, mission partners and customers, a chance ascertain what The Journal means to you personally. Is it helpful? Do you value it as a source of information? It's very important that you let us know. Here's why: The Journal is rapidly becoming a member of an exclusive club in our region. It is one of the few remaining base newspapers still being produced. Over the last two years, at least three military installations in our region have discontinued their base newspapers in favor of going exclusively to social media and DoD-owned websites. For this reason, it's time we get a better picture from you on how you use this paper. On this page, you'll find information on how to access an online survey to give us feedback on how you engage with The Journal. This readership survey takes less than 10 minutes, but the collective results will impact on how The Journal

is produced and distributed. I strongly encourage you to take the time — right now — to get on your smart phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer and let your voice be heard. The team of writers at NSAB, Walter Reed-Bethesda and the Uniformed Services University, work hard to tell YOUR stories — the stories of those who work hard and devote themselves to improving the quality of life for our service members, veterans and their families. Every day, you impact lives with your incredible work, and we want to tell the world about it. It's important that we know how to help you stay connected with the stories that interest you and keep you informed. As always, thank you for all of your dedicated service and the things you do each day to make this installation one of the best in America's fleet. Your efforts truly matter and make a difference.

On The Cover

Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine visited the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda Sept. 20. The visit included lunch for service members, Wounded Warriors and their families along with the chance to speak and take photos with Irvine.

PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Online Readership Survey

NSA Bethesda is conducting a survey of The Journal readers. Tell us what you think! The 5-10 minute survey is open through January 18th. Participate now at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/journal17

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Heimall Becomes WRNMMC'S Director; Lane To Lead NCR-MD

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran June 2.

Army Col. Michael S. Heimall became director of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) May 26, assuming responsibilities from Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) David A. Lane, who will become director of the National Capital Region Medical Directorate (NCR-MD).

During the change of authority ceremony in front of the historic Tower on Naval Support Activity Bethesda, home to WRNMMC, Heimall said he's excited for the opportunity to lead "the President's Hospital," although he's not new to commanding a military treatment facility.

"After 29 years, I've had the privilege of commanding three hospitals including two medical centers, serve as the interim [WRNMMC] director, and now, the privilege of leading our nation's flagship medical center," Heimall said. "I cannot tell you how humbled and honored I am," he added.

Heimall, who came to WRNMMC last August after serving as commander of William Beaumont Army Medical Center at Fort Bliss, Texas, was interim director of WRNMMC from November to January prior to Lane becoming director. Heimall commanded U.S. Army Medical Department Activity and Irwin Army Community Hospital at Fort Riley, Kan., and he was the medical company commander of the 93rd Evacuation Hospital and the detachment commander, U.S. Army Dental Activity at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. The colonel was also deputy commander for administration at U.S. Army Medical Department Activity and Blanchfield Army Community Hospital at Fort Campbell, Ky. He has deployed as the Medical Operations Officer for the Combined Forces Special Operations Command Central.

Saluting Lane for his leadership, Heimall said the admiral, in 115 days as the WRNMMC director, "placed a keen focus on improving staff engagement as key to ensuring an extraordinary patient experience for every patient, every time.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Army Col. Michael S. Heimall assumes the directorship of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) during a change of authority ceremony May 26. He accepts the WRNMMC flag from Navy Vice Adm. (Dr.) Raquel C. Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency.

I am committed to continuing that focus and look forward to learning and working with you as we go forward and continuing what you started, in the months ahead."

Heimall added the Military Health System is at a crossroads. "Our patients, our parent services and Congress are demanding we live up to the commitment our nation has made to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms. They are demanding a health care system that is responsive to the needs of our patients, and a system that increases the readiness of our force, and sustains and improves upon the trauma and critical care skills we have developed over 14 years of war," he explained.

"Here at the flagship of military medicine, we have the opportunity to define that narrative that will dominate this debate," the colonel continued. "We are leading the change, proving that we can expand access, improve readiness and operate efficiently

while supporting the readiness requirements of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps."

In order to do this, WRNMMC must not think of itself as one hospital with 41,000 patients to care for, Heimall continued. "We must think of our role within the National Capital Region health system as one of 13 practice locations caring for more than 270,000 lives while ensuring a ready medical force of nearly 11,000 Sailors, Airmen and Soldiers," he concluded.

Lane, as NCR-MD director, explained his sphere of responsibility will increase in overseeing those 13 medical facilities, and he will remain focused on people, staff and beneficiaries and providing the best services. Lane added during his brief tenure as WRNMMC director, he was able to learn there are "7,000 smart, passionate health-care professionals working at [WRNMMC] who either care for patients every day, or care for people who care for patients. Nearly every one of our staff is truly dedicated and committed to ensuring that every patient has an extraordinary experience of care every time. You can feel that as you walk through the hospital."

Navy Vice Adm. (Dr.) Raquel C. Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency, who officiated the change of authority agreed. "It's not easy leading during a time when there is a significant amount of change. I think the measure of your success is really evident in the patients who have had the benefit of the care and support you've given them every day," she said.

She added the change of authority is "an important aspect of what we do at WRNMMC. It's not something that needs to be taken lightly. There's a very profound responsibility each and every one of you holds in taking care of our patients. Part of this change of authority is going to allow the WRNMMC staff to collectively concentrate on what's best for our patients.

"You've already done great tremendous work," Bono said to the WRNMMC staff. "We need to build on that," she added. "In order to do that and do it well, we need the continued leadership that we have in Colonel Heimall and Admiral Lane."

NSAB Hosts National Night Out

By MC3 William Phillips
NSAB Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Aug. 11.

Tuesday Aug. 7, 1984 ushered in the inaugural National Night Out, and every year after, the National Night Out has been celebrated the first Tuesday of August in 16,124 communities from all fifty states, U.S. Territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide.

Naval support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) hosted its National Night Out Aug. 2 on the front lawn of the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda.

The National Night out is a way for law enforcement and the public to interact.

"We [police officers] are able to show face in a way that isn't just pulling people over and writing tickets," said MA3 Shannell James, NSAB's installation crime prevention officer. "We just want everyone to know that we aren't the bad guys that are only here to get you in trouble."

For some the National Night Out is a way to foster a relationship with the local community they serve.

"We are able to come together to build relationships in the community and help with prevent crime," said

Montgomery County Police Officer Dana Stroman. "It is important for the community and law enforcement to have a positive relationship with one another."

According to Stroman, it is important for a local community and the police to keep an eye out for each other.

For some the National Night Out was a way to advertise services that they offered.

"This is a great event to promote the SHARP and SAPR program, it gives us the ability to connect with the staff that we don't get to see regularly," said Rosemary Galvan Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. "It is a great way to get to know the local law enforcement that we have to work with. It's a chance to see them for a fun reason rather than business."

Galvan stated that it is important for people to know what resources are available for them.

The National Night Out was to show people that law enforcement officers are people too.

"With everything that is going on around the country, it's important to let the public know that we are here to help and not just pull you over," said James. "We want to show unity with the public, and let them know that we are people too."



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Naval Support Activity Bethesda hosted the National Night Out at the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda Aug. 2.

For more information about the NSAB Crime Prevention Unit contact MA3 Shannell James at shannell.l.james.mil@mail.mil

Looking Back 2016



PHOTO BY MC2 HANK GETTYS

A worker shovels snow during the only major snowstorm last winter in the National Capital Region.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

People take photos of celebrity chef Robert Irvine during the Invincible Spirit Festival May 20 that was sponsored by The Gary Sinise Foundation and the Lt. Dan Band.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

A group of motorcyclists rode from Naval Support Activity Bethesda to Washington, D.C. May 29 to participate in Rolling Thunder.

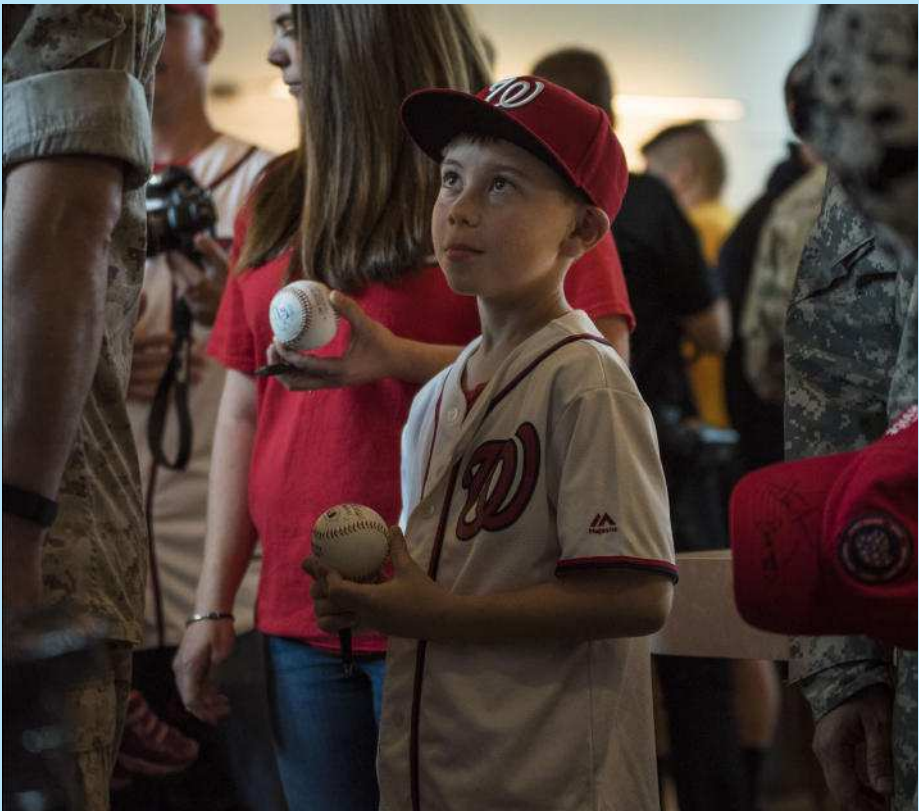


PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

The Washington Nationals visited the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda for a meet and greet with service members aboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda April 27.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) hosted the 2016 Eggstravaganza at the MWR Sports Complex for the children and family of personnel on Naval Support Activity Bethesda March 19.

Looking Back 2016



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

A runner is doused with colored powder during NSAB's Morale Welfare and Recreation Color Run June 11.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Many children and adults dressed as some of their favorite characters at Morale Welfare and Recreation's Fall Fest Oct. 25.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Navy Exchange held their annual Chief Petty Officer Fashion Show Aug. 17.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Children join their parents aboard Naval Support Activity Support Bethesda and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center during Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day April 28.

Active Shooter Drill Tests NSAB Security Response

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Feb. 11.

The cries for help came from the stairwell.

Two security personnel were clearing Bldg. A on the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) campus when they heard someone yelling.

"Help! I've been shot. I think my friend is dead!" shouted one of the wounded actors in this active shooter drill held onboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Feb. 4 during the Navy-wide Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield.

The two officers went down the stairwell and passed the wounded and dead actors in this simulated scenario to make sure the building was clear. The shooter, played by Master-at-Arms 1st Class Nate Cable, had made his way through the building and down to the USU security office where he shot the pre-planned targets.

After he was apprehended by security, the officers went through the buildings to make sure the area was secure before an announcement was made over the base's loudspeakers that the exercise had been completed.

This active shooter drill was one of many exercises during the two weeks of Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield 2016, a Navy-wide exercise that assesses law enforcement response in several different scenarios.

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Jonathan Cales, leading petty officer of NSAB's Security Training Department, said all the objectives of Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield are being met and they are

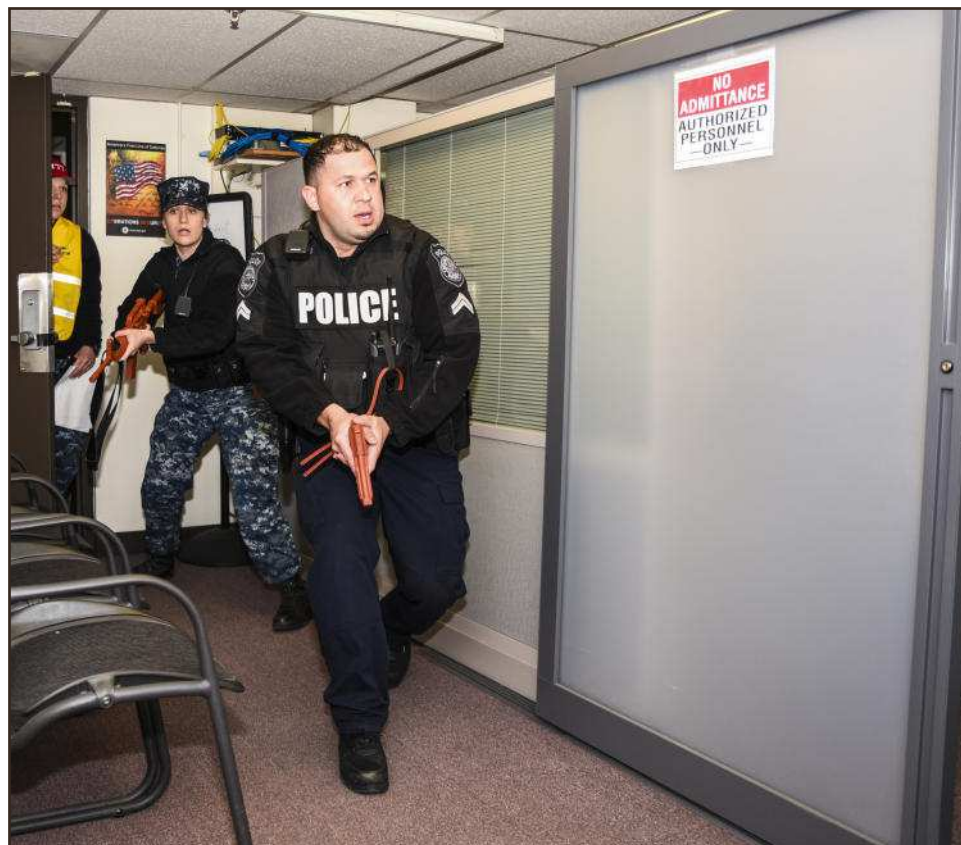


PHOTO BY MC2 HANK GETTYS

Naval Support Activity Bethesda Security personnel respond during an active shooter drill Feb. 4 as part of the Navy-wide Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield exercise.

learning from it as well.

Not only does Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield help Security learn, but Cales said it helps those who come to the installation to know how to act in a real-world event.

USU hosted the active shooter scenario this year because of the tough environment law enforcement would face if an actual incident occurred there, Cales said, pointing out several rooms and stairwells and how the buildings are all connected

through hallways.

"When it comes to an active shooter, if you can hear gunshots and you can hear screaming then you kind of get a sense of which direction you need to go," Cales said. "In the event that you respond on scene and you don't hear that, then you have to systematically clear every floor, which means every room, every hallway, every staircase, until you clear the entire building. Then you would go from building to building to building until you can clear

the entire facility."

Another reason the drill was at USU was that higher education facilities have become frequent targets for active shootings. A 2013 FBI report on active shooter incidents in the United States lists educational environments, government facilities and health care facilities as three of 11 categories where the public is at risk, all three of which are housed within NSAB.

"Our chances, statistically speaking, of that being a realistic threat for us are high," Cales said. "Yes, the Navy does say that we will conduct active shooter exercises annually, and that we will do annual training for active shooters. However, it's not just a check in the box. It is us practicing for a very realistic threat that we face every day."

All the objectives were met during the drill, which had base security responding as if it were an actual event, Cales said.

"We're meeting our objectives and we're learning from it at the same time," Cales said. "Nothing is ever expected to be perfect ... had I just stood downstairs in the USU security office and said 'Okay, activate the (exercise) now' and made the call myself, my guys really aren't getting a lot out of the training."

Notices went out via Everbridge and the base's loudspeakers that an active shooter exercise was happening and instructing people across the installation to shelter-in-place.

"I walked upstairs and it seemed that everybody sheltered in place – doors were locked where they could be and everyone did what the appropriate steps were for an active shooter," said Chris Mottler, USU security director.

Giving the Gift of Life

Blood, Platelet Donations Needed Year-Round

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran July 7.

As Chief Petty Officer Roy Jaquez walked through the mezzanine level of Bldg. 9 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center with his family, the Sailor noticed personnel from the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) hosting a blood drive. He decided to stop to donate "the gift of life."

"I walked by and they had it set up," Jaquez said with a laugh in explaining his simple reason for donating. His young son proudly watched his father donate.

During the two-day blood drive at WRNMMC June 29-30, ASBP staff serviced 90 donors and collected more than 60 units according to Shawntel Trowell, public affairs specialist/blood donor recruiter for the Armed Services Blood Bank Center-National Capital Region/ASBP at WRNMMC.

"It is extremely important for people to donate because there is no substitute for human blood, and it is only good for 35 to 42 days after collection," Trowell explained. "Platelets have to be used within five days after collection. Also, every day brings advances in lifesaving techniques, many of which require blood or blood products," she continued.

"It is also important to donate with the ASBP because our mission is the troops, their families and veterans. We serve those who serve," Trowell said.

The summer can pose an additional challenge for blood and platelet donations because of vacations and other seasonal activities which can keep people busy, donor center officials explained. They remind regular and potential donors the need for lifesaving blood and platelet donations is constant to maintain a sufficient supply for patients.

Trowell added there are two ASBP donor centers in the area. In addition to the WRNMMC donor center, there is one at the Pentagon. Those interested in hosting a blood drive can call Trowell at 240-271-8108, or Donna Onwona at 202-294-6674.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Chief Petty Officer Roy Jaquez donates blood June 29 during a two-day Armed Services Blood Program blood drive at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

"We are the official blood program of the U.S. military," Trowell stated. For more information, visit the ASBP site at www.militaryblood.dod.mil.

Women's History Month: NSAB Sailor Tackles Her Goals

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Editor's Note: This story originally ran March 24.

Navy Master-at-Arms 1st Class Colleen Dibble knows about being the only female in the room as she works in a male-dominated field and is part of the 15 percent of women who are active-duty U.S. military.

She was the only woman master-at-arms during her first assignment to Misawa Air Base in Misawa, Japan for 11 months and has been one of the few women to work in Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Security Department since she came to the installation in 2013.

But she views herself as just another member of the team.

"You can't have bias," Dibble said. "You have to see yourself as an equal and you have to be an equal. So you're in the same boat. We're all Sailors – not male, not female – we're all Sailors, we're all trying to get the mission accomplished."

Dibble still sought out a female mentor to work through challenges she has faced as a woman working in a male-dominated field. As her leadership is all male, she had to go outside her command to find Navy Lt. Cmdr. Melissa Burke, a former master-at-arms who now works with the Warrior Family Coordination Cell, to guide her through some of the challenges Dibble has faced.

Burke said she gives Dibble advice on how to handle stressful situations and passes on advice she received from female colleagues when she was a master-at-arms in the '90s.

Burke said she's seen Dibble grow during her time at NSAB and that she's honored to be her mentor.

"She's branched out from 'I'm a Sailor and now let me think what needs to be done,' to 'Let me think about my fellow Sailors and how I can mentor them and how I can help them,'" Burke said.

March is Women's History Month – and the theme this year is "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government."

Another woman Dibble said she looks up to is Navy Vice Chief of Naval Operations Michelle Howard, who became the first woman Vice Chief of Naval Operations and four-star admiral in 2014.

"She speaks a lot on different leadership traits which I like," Dibble said. "I look up to her. She comes here often, but I haven't seen her yet."

During her time at NSAB, Dibble has been tasked with starting the base's crime prevention program and one of her biggest responsibilities was putting on a National Night Out event.



COURTESY PHOTO

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Colleen Dibble attends an outdoor Washington Capitals hockey game at Nationals Park January 2015.

"She networked with so many people out in the local community, inside the base populations and she far exceeded anyone's expectations," said NSAB Security Dept. Leading Petty Officer Master-at-Arms 1st Class Raymond Herrera. "There was food, vendors, and so many things put together that it completely blew people's minds ... she didn't

have to do that. She could've done something really small, but she took it upon herself and said 'I want this to be huge, I want it to be lasting, and I want it to continue on even when I'm gone from this installation.' She set the bar really high."

That event was a major accomplishment for Dibble, not because it was a big event but because it got the Sailors excited about working in the community.

Dibble always has been interested in sports, but it wasn't until she came to NSAB that she actually decided to play football, which is one of her favorite sports.

"The Sailors enjoyed themselves and they keep asking me, 'When's the next event?'" she said.

Dibble, 28, said she joined the Navy because her goal is to join the Judge Advocate General's Corps. She is a step closer to that goal as she is cross-rating to legalman and leaving NSAB to go to Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island.

She is the first member of her



COURTESY PHOTO

Dibble makes a tackle during a Washington Prodigy Women's Football game.

family to enlist and her reenlistment is set to take place at a Washington Capitals game at the Verizon Center in April.

Dibble always has been interested in sports, but it wasn't until she came to NSAB that she actually decided to play football, which is one of her favorite sports. Before playing on a team she coached a youth football team and was the coach of the Naval Air Facility Misawa Command Team.

"I never felt that I was good enough to play football," Dibble said. "I always thought of football as a guy's sport."

That changed after she played on her Purdue alumni flag football team where she saw a flyer to try out for the all-women's tackle football team: the Washington Prodigy. She now plays left guard on the offensive line for the team and said she likes being able to get in hits and tackles during each play.

"I've gone against some people that are three times the size of me," Dibble said. "It's just such a good game – that's why I love playing it."

Dibble will only be able to play half of this year's season since she is moving to Rhode Island, but said she plans to continue being involved with the sport in some fashion.

Dibble and Burke both said they've seen changes in allowing woman to perform roles in the military that were traditionally done by men.

"We continue to break down barriers and show we actually have a lot to bring and a lot to offer to those [security] fields," Burke said.

When asked if she sees herself as a role model, Dibble said she wouldn't necessarily call herself one.

"I just try to set [my Sailors] up for success," she said. "I make sure that the other Sailors are motivated and I want everyone to succeed."

Looking Back 2016



PHOTO BY AIRMAN MATTHEW HOBSON

A Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences third year medical student travels across a one rope bridge.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

The Warrior Transition Brigade aboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda held an adaptive combatives workshop Aug. 17-18. The workshop was a way for service members to learn adaptive martial arts and self defense.



PHOTO BY ANDREW DAMSTEDT

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Zane Kentner looks at a map as he assesses the situation during a suspicious package training exercise onboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda Feb. 10 during Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield 2016.



PHOTO BY AIRMAN MATTHEW HOBSON

Sailors and civilians aboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda participate in multiple events recognizing Earth Week throughout the week of April 18-22.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and civilians participate in a two-mile run on July 28, celebrating Army medicine's 241st birthday at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Looking Back 2016



PHOTO BY MCI CHRISTOPHER KRUCKE

Service members and civilians roll out part of the Rapid Response Shelter (RRS) during setup in front of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's historic Tower on June 13. The RRS is an inflatable, modular design, self-sustaining tent that has the capacity to serve as a 25-bed hospital in a controlled atmosphere, external to the main hospital in case of emergencies.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences held its Advanced Combat Medical Experience (ACME) Training Exercise aboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda July 26.



PHOTO BY AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. STEPHANIE MORRIS

The Honorable Peter Levine, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, presents the ceremonial mace to Dr. Richard W. Thomas, president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, officially installing Thomas as the university's sixth leader.



PHOTO BY MC2 HANK GETTYS

A kayak football player speedily turns his kayak during one of the kayak football games in the tournament held at Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Fitness Center pool March 12. The tournament was hosted by NSAB's Morale Welfare and Recreation.

Capstone Field Exercise Tests USU's Medical Students

By Sarah Marshall
USU External Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Nov. 3.

Complete with helicopter evacuations, mock explosions, reality-based missions – even canine casualties – medical students from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) recently experienced the challenges of caring for patients in a simulated combat environment.

The fourth-year medical students participated in a field exercise, known as Operation Bushmaster, or Medical Field Practicum 202, which took place Oct. 10-21 at Fort Indiantown Gap, an Army National Guard post nestled in the mountains just north of Harrisburg, Pa. The exercise aims to teach future military medical officers the skills they need to perform their duties in operational assignments after medical school, while preparing them to become leaders in the military health care system, explained Army Col. Francis O'Connor, Professor and Chair of Military and Emergency Medicine (MEM) at USU.

Bushmaster is the capstone event of the students' military medical education, challenging their knowledge of military medical practice, tactical combat casualty care (TCCC), and leadership. The exercise involves nearly 500 personnel and puts in to patient casualty play more than 2,000 patient scenarios. A number of volunteer faculty members supported the evolution, along with colleagues within the Military Health System, including Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. Active duty and reserve units throughout the mid-Atlantic also assisted, including Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Graduate School of Nursing students participated, as well as international military medical officers from Israel, the United Kingdom, Mexico, France and Canada. First-year medical students had a role, too. Donning "cut suits" or moulage, they put on their best potential Academy Award-winning performances to portray casualties, ranging from cardiac arrest to gunshot wounds.

Before heading up to Bushmaster, the students went through a two-week intensive military contingency medicine course, during which they were presented operational problems, and were given pre-deployment training, just as they would have prior to a real deployment, O'Connor said. This classroom phase included



PHOTO BY SHARON HOLLAND

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences incorporated a helicopter simulator at Operation Bushmaster so students could experience the challenges of caring for an evac patient in flight.

lectures, small group sessions, tactical combat casualty care training, and practical exercises, focusing on needed skillsets and team building. As they became a cohesive unit, they prepared to deploy to the notional country of Pandakar facing challenges from rebel forces, he said.

The students were then sent sequentially, in two groups, to spend five days on the Army post. Once there, they were assigned to one of four platoons – each undergoing the same scenarios, planning and executing missions, while simultaneously caring for casualties. The students were constantly faced with unfolding conditions, round-the-clock, with scenarios involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), wide-spread disease outbreaks, simulated injured working dogs, and triaging the wounded while arranging for their evacuation and caring for them in flight.

"While patient care is a large part of their training, communication skills and logistics are just as important – it's essential to obtain the necessary supplies and manage logistics," O'Connor said. However, according to O'Connor, the exercise is first and foremost a test of leadership.

Throughout the exercise, the

students were assigned various roles, such as triage officer, medical logistics, litter bearers transporting patients, or patient administrators. They frequently rotated positions, allowing each student to practice different roles. A Pandakar "day" was four hours in duration real-time; with each day change came a new job and responsibility.

Meanwhile, the students were observed by faculty and graded on how well they performed key positions, including platoon leader, ambulance team leader, combat stress control officer, preventive medicine officer, or ambulance team leader. Grades were based on a number of factors, including communication and leadership skills.

On the final day, the platoons – with about 25 students each – responded to a mock mass casualty with more than 30 wounded. Simulated gunfire and explosions resonated through the air as smoke billowed through the woods, and casualties rapidly came from left and right.

"They might have thought they knew what they were going to walk into, but when they see the sheer magnitude and the sights – it's a shock to the senses," O'Connor said.

"They have to take a step back, reach back from lessons learned over the prior four days, and within the chaos of the environment, come up with a plan, and attempt to create order and balance, and most importantly, move the casualties. It's very difficult, and very realistic."

Overall, though, the students' experience was both challenging and rewarding, he said. As they were constantly being thrown problems, they had to adapt in that environment and work as a team. Everyone looked out for one another, making sure they all stayed hydrated, had adequate rest, and did not overexert themselves – an important aspect of combat stress.

"It's an extremely important exercise, and it definitely tests the students in ways that cannot be accomplished in a classroom," he said. O'Connor credits the leadership of Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Kevin Semelrath, the exercise director, and his non-commissioned officer-in-charge, Army Sgt. 1st Class Alex Menchaca, as well as all supporting members in MEM, for Bushmaster's success.

After the exercise, the students returned to their clinical rotations across the country.

ER Trains on Mass Decon Shelter



PHOTO BY MC1 CHRISTOPHER KRUCKE

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center employees set up a patient decontamination shelter during a training exercise May 21 in the medical center's emergency room parking lot.

**By MC1 Christopher Krucke
WRNMMC Public Affairs**

Editor's Note: This story originally ran June 9.

"We are the best!" excitedly shouted Matthew Sias, decontamination program manager, Department of Emergency Management, when describing the performance of his decontamination (decon) team while setting up the patient decon shelter during a training exercise May 21 in the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center emergency room (ER) parking lot.

According to Sias the goal is to have the tent up in 15 minutes or less in the event of a mass contamination event. The tent is used to help supplement the emergency room's fixed facility decon system.

"When we have a large event and we deem we will have more patients than our facility can handle, we will bring in our temporary tent shelter which adds three more lanes for patient decontamination," Sias said. "We activate our decon team, which is a 60-person augmentee program throughout the hospital. Personnel come out and support the emergency department by cleaning patients and

taking care of those coming in for assistance."

Army Capt. Alex Hernandez, surgical intensive care unit nurse, said the decon training is conducted twice monthly to ensure that if anything was to happen within the National Capital Region, this team would be ready to respond to any emergencies.

"In order for us to support our fellow [service members] who work in this area we need to be prepared. If we are not prepared we are not able to respond and provide the best care to our community," Hernandez said.

Sias said the training went well over the last couple months and that they were able to flow through it quickly, identify what needed to happen and move to the next task.

"The reason we do this is because there is always something happening throughout the world, not necessarily in a terroristic way," Sias said.

WRNMMC has handled several incidents in the last couple of years, such as lab and industrial accidents where victims had to be decontaminated for various reasons.

"However, in the terroristic world, back in 2013 we had the ricin incident where we actually took care of those patients right here at our facility," Sias said.

Pris Joyner, nurse specialist in the Emergency Department, said that "In the world we live in today, looking at the events that have happened, we have to be ready for any mass causality event or any large group of people. The Washington D.C. area, just by its nature, has many large group events and it is just a world where we have to be ready."

Sias continued that this program receives a lot of command support, which he thinks is outstanding.

"In the past I have been with commands that did not receive as much command support and it absolutely showed in the kind of turnout that we would have and the equipment that we were able to work with," Sias explained. "This is a fantastic kind of set-up to have here and our emergency department has done a phenomenal job of making sure that they are capable and staffed to handle these issues."

"We are the ER and we are always ready for whatever comes through our door," said Joyner.

Staff Sgt. Motivated by Wounded Warriors

By MC3 William Phillips
NSAB Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran May 5.

A Soldier going through the Warrior Transition Brigade (WTB) asked Staff Sgt. Loriann DeMelis, an inpatient squad leader at the WTB, if she had done her pull-ups.

"No, once you start doing them I'll start doing them," DeMelis said.

The Soldier rolled his wheelchair into DeMelis' doorway, raised himself up to the pull-up bar that hung in her doorway, put his prosthetic arm and then his other arm on the bar and started doing pull-ups right out of his wheelchair.

"It's amazing how resilient these service members are," said DeMelis. "It motivated me to help these service members as much as I can."

Like some people who enlist in the military, DeMelis was not sure about what she wanted to do for a living after high school.

"After high school I was walking around aimlessly," said DeMelis. "I was working but I wasn't sure what to do. So one day I went to talk to an Army recruiter, it sounded like something I could see myself doing so I decided to enlist."

DeMelis enlisted in the Connecticut National Guard's military police in 1984 and deployed with the District of Columbia Army National Guard's 275th Military Police Company from January 1991 to May 1991 in support of Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield. After returning from deployment she decided to separate from the military in 1992.

"I got out after Desert Storm because I went through a lot of emotions," said DeMelis. "It was my first deployment, I was young and scared, and thought 'I don't ever want to do this again.' I got out in fear of getting deployed again."

For the next 14 years, she worked odd jobs with no upward mobility or long-term benefits.

"Again I came to a point in my life where I changed careers from carpentry to teaching golf. Even though it was fun, there was no future or retirement," said DeMelis.

After seeing the United States' response to 9/11 and the situation in Iraq, she decided to enlist again.

"I came back in 2006 because of everything that was going on in Iraq and Afghanistan. I just felt at that time in my life that could help," said DeMelis.



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Staff Sgt. Loriann DeMelis poses for a photo.

"I wanted to go fight for my country."

DeMelis deployed in 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This second deployment shaped her future.

"I lost my squad leader two weeks into a deployment in Iraq, which was pretty devastating," said DeMelis. "We had a few other injuries throughout the deployment."

As a result of her experiences, DeMelis wanted to serve in a more permanent capacity and have a larger impact so she found a way to volunteer and serve on active duty as a squad leader supporting the WTB.

"My lieutenant was shot in the neck by a sniper and he was here at Walter Reed for years," said DeMelis. "I think that's what drew me to the WTB here. It was my lieutenant being injured that made me want to come here."

For DeMelis, serving as a squad leader at the WTB has been both rewarding and humbling.

"Words can't describe what it is like serving as a squad leader here," said DeMelis. "It is extremely

rewarding seeing these service members coming back from down range; to be able to be there for them and their families, and to see them going from barely being alive in the hospital, to living a normal life. To see that day in and day out is a humbling experience."

For the first few years in her demanding role as squad leader, it was hard for DeMelis to keep control of her emotions.

"There are times where you lose [service members] and it gets emotional," said DeMelis. "The first couple of years were very stressful and emotional and it was hard to keep my feelings in check. There were times that I had to shut my door and cry. When it got really bad there were times that I had to reach out to behavioral health."

Recognizing the positive impact it has had, DeMelis continues to utilize behavioral health.

"I grew up keeping my emotions and feelings inside so behavioral health allows me to let out what I have been bottling up," said DeMelis. "It was great once I learned that I could see someone and let it all out."

During some of DeMelis' sessions, she finds emotions she wasn't expecting to find.

"When I go I usually end up really opening up and finding stuff that I didn't really know that was building up inside," said DeMelis. "You build up anxiety inside of you and don't even know it until you go see somebody."

DeMelis said that if she could talk to a service member who is struggling with the decision to get help, she would tell them her story.

"I used to think that if you went and saw behavioral health your career's done and you are put in a category by yourself," said DeMelis. "I went through that [deciding to get help] and I would share my story with them. I would try to help them understand that it is ok to get help."

As challenging as her career has been so far, she draws motivation from the warriors she works with on a daily basis.

"For me it is easy to stay motivated," DeMelis said. "Seeing what these service members go through and [how] they come out on top, it motivates me to serve more. I used to say I can't wait until my 20 years are up, but now I want to stick it out past my 20 years. I want to serve as long as I can."

NSAB Wins SECNAV Energy Achievement Gold

By MC3 William Phillips
NSAB Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Oct. 20.

Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) was awarded the 2016 Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Energy Achievement Gold Level Oct. 12.

"SECNAV has an award system to incentivize installations to reduce their energy consumption; it's not just electrical it's steam usage, water or just about any kind of fuel that can be consumed as an installation," said Luke Armstrong, installation energy manager. "We have an interest in reducing those amounts because it saves financial resources."

Even though NSAB was awarded the platinum level for energy efficiency for fiscal year 2015, there has been continued energy efficiency throughout this past fiscal year.

"For 2016 we scored within the gold range, which

denotes a very good energy program," said Armstrong. "Although gold is a very noble achievement, we did drop one ranking. For this year's award we are tracking a 40 percent energy reduction, which coming off a platinum year is still a significant amount. We are currently leading the region in energy reduction for the third quarter of the year."

NSAB is working to get back to platinum.

"We always want to maintain excellence and strive to be the best energy program in the entire Navy," said Armstrong. "Our aspiration is to achieve the highest energy award level."

NSAB has saved taxpayer dollars by going green. In fiscal year 2016, NSAB saved \$16 million through its energy-savings measures as well as taking advantage of Pepco incentive programs that promote energy conservation.

"NSAB has really sunk our teeth into it," said

Armstrong. "If we feel like we can save energy on this project then we are applying for those incentives to further promote the viability of projects on NSAB. It is one of the reasons you see so much construction going on when you do, because we were able to capture that funding, which makes our project a little more competitive in the region."

Some missions don't allow NSAB and its mission partners to be as energy efficient as possible, but there are still ways to improve.

"In areas that have high usage needs, there are some options," said Armstrong. "For example, if a mission in [Walter Reed Bethesda] needs an exact amount and quality of water, then that is what they need to have; but we can have the restrooms use rainwater when the toilets are flushed. We can find other areas that produce savings that do not impact the mission."

Driving Rehabilitation Program Helps Put Wounded Warriors on the Road to Recovery

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Jan. 28.

It's quite easy to forget while sitting next to retired Air Force Master Sgt. Jesse Graham as he drives his sleek, black, sports pick-up truck that he's paralyzed.

The ride is smooth as you look to your left and see Graham skillfully using hand devices to safely steer, accelerate and stop the truck. Graham's wife, Bobbie, and his ever-loyal service dog, Stanley, are seated in the back seat enjoying the ride around Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) on Naval Support Activity Bethesda.

"The idea of just being able to get around and have the freedom to do what you want to do, to not be on someone else's schedule and not have to inconvenience other people...is a huge deal," says Graham, injured in a 2014 snowboard accident.

"From a wife's standpoint, it also means my independence as well," Bobbie said of her husband's ability to drive again following his devastating injury. "We can only be together so much, plus we have the kids, 9-year-old twins, at home," she added.

The retired Air Force master sergeant "re-learned" to drive at WRNMMC in a program that is the only one of its kind in the Department of Defense (DoD). The program has put well over a 100 wounded, ill and injured service members back on the road to recovery in more ways than one.

Since 2008, retired Army Maj. Tammy Phipps has overseen the driving rehabilitation program she started "from the ground up" at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, D.C.

In 2011 when WRAMC integrated with the National Naval Medical Center to form WRNMMC, Phipps moved with the program to the new military treatment facility (MTF), also called "the flagship of military medicine" and the "President's Hospital" because of the number of the commanders in chief, Congress members and their families who have received care at the hospital.

Phipps, an occupational therapist and certified driving rehabilitation specialist, explained how she began the program following her deployment to Iraq while still on active duty.

"I met [then] Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Eric B. Schoomaker, the U.S. Army surgeon general, in Iraq in the spring of 2008. His aide-de-camp was Army Maj. David Rozelle, who was the first amputee to stay on active duty and return to [combat] theater," Phipps said. It was Rozelle who actually discovered her background in driving rehabilitation.

Phipps enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guards in 1993, and became the first female in a South Dakota combat unit while serving with the 153rd Combat Engineers in 1996. During her service, Phipps earned her master's degree in occupational therapy from the University of South Dakota and a direct commission into the U.S. Army Reserve.

She also worked as a staff occupational therapist at Avera St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen, South Dakota. "I received continuing education in the area of driving rehabilitation, partly funded by the U.S. Army Reserve, and developed the third civilian driving rehab program in South Dakota in Aberdeen in 2004."

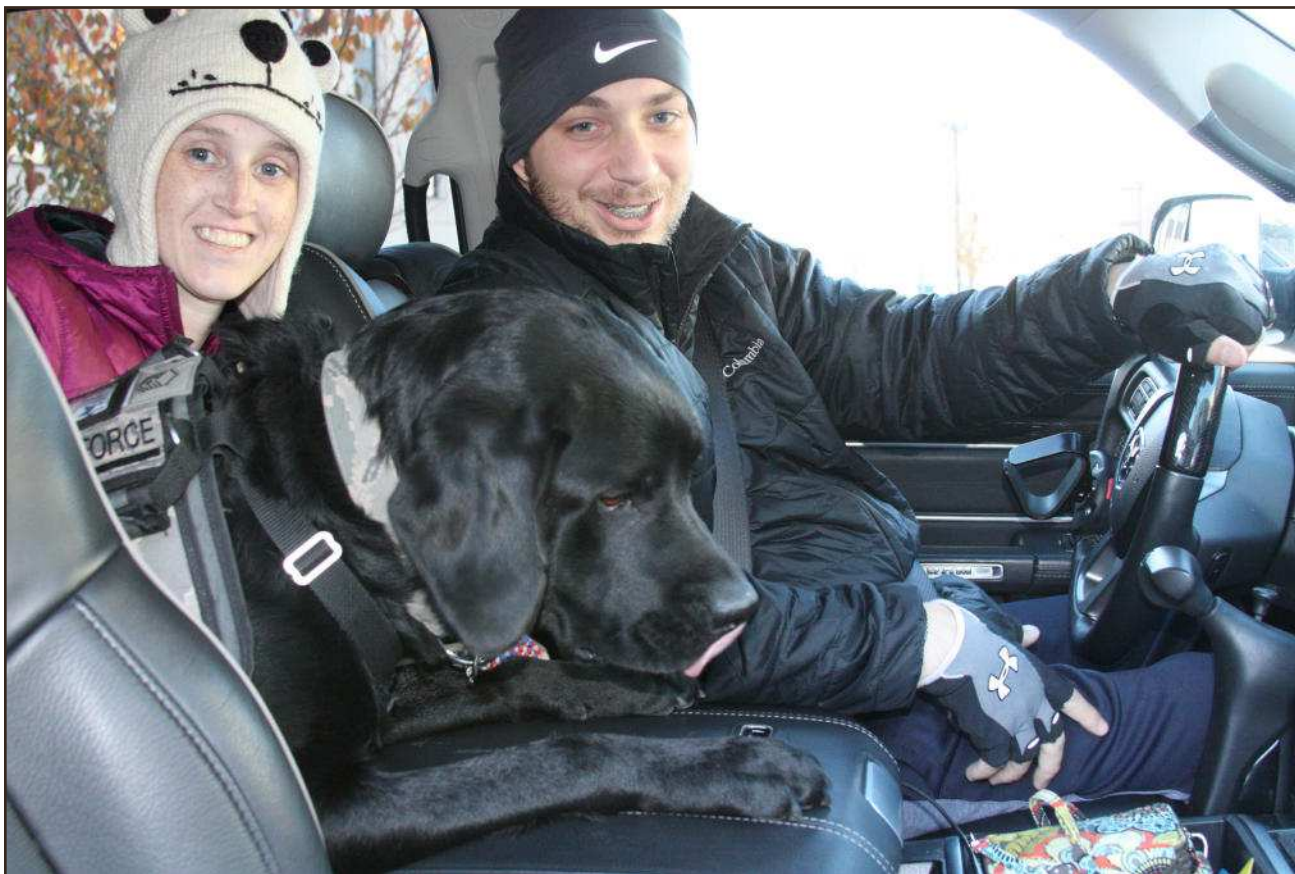


PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Jesse Graham and his wife, Bobbi, and his service dog, Stanley, take a break following his drive around Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

In 2007, she deployed with a combat stress team to Iraq. She met Schoomaker the following year, which led to establishing the driving rehab program at WRAMC.

The influx of wounded warriors at WRAMC requesting driving rehabilitation was "the driving force" behind establishing the DoD program, Phipps explained. In the program, she assists active duty service members with a number of medical conditions that could impair driving, including amputations, paralysis, eye injuries, brain injuries, post-traumatic stress, [and] illnesses such as ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, which is also called Lou Gehrig's Disease), MS (Multiple Sclerosis), MD (Muscular Dystrophy).

She added that service members have to be medically cleared by their providers and therapists to participate in the program. "I would say that 95 percent of my population will return to driving."

Every service member is different, so length of participation in the program varies, Phipps said. Before they are certified road ready, the service members must "demonstrate safe, independent driving using adaptive equipment or technique," she added. "That can be one time for some, while I have had some who have worked with my program well into a year."

WRNMMC has three vehicles for the program. "They are all modified in different ways so that we can serve as many disabilities as possible," Phipps added. "I have warriors with quadruple amputations on the road, as well as quadriplegia (paralysis from neck down)."

Phipps also assists the service members in obtaining their own vehicles adapted to the driver. She assists service members with getting their VA benefits for installation and prescription of adaptive

equipment. She credits the American Red Cross and other non-federal entities who have donated vehicles or funds to assist service members and their families.

Phipps estimates she has assisted Wounded Warriors acquire approximately 50 vans and vehicles, as well as help them modify about 400 vehicles to accommodate their needs over the last seven years.

She said the program is not only about preparing the service member to drive again, but also adapting the vehicles to the service member who will be driving them. For this aspect, Phipps may also work with the staff of the 3D Medical Application Center at WRNMMC, who are able to produce steering wheel adapters and other devices to assist service members get behind the wheel and on the roads again.

Army Capt. Edward "Flip" Klein is another of the Wounded Warriors who has benefitted from the driving rehabilitation program. He sustained severe injuries on Oct. 22, 2012 in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan.

"I was leading a combat patrol with my company [Bravo Company of the 2nd Infantry Division], and stepped on an improvised explosive device that led to the amputation of both of my legs above the knee and my right arm below the elbow," the Little Rock, Arkansas native explained.

He arrived at WRNMMC on Oct. 31, 2012.

"I started the adaptive driving program in the spring of 2013, approximately six months after my injury," said Klein, a 1989 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

"I participated in the driving program for

Airman Resilient After Motorcycle Crash

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This story originally ran July 14.

The 21-year-old Airman had a hard time sleeping that night. Two in the morning Sept. 19, 2015, he hadn't found a buddy to ride with him, so Air Force Senior Airman Kyle Cook set out on his motorcycle—on an unfamiliar Hampton, Va., road in the dark—alone.

Rounding a bend, he saw arrows on the pavement. Cook anticipated an open intersection ahead and changed lanes. Trees blocked his view. There was no time to react.

His Buell 1125R struck the curb in front of him at full-speed. The crash launched Cook off his bike, flying more than two feet off the ground, and smashed the experienced rider into a tree.

The tree broke his fall, fractured his left leg in three places—and severed the right.

"It took all the skin off my leg, and then the leg with it," he said.

His helmet struck the pavement below.

"I just [laid] there, kinda confused," Cook explained. "I thought I had just [fallen] off my bike; I didn't even know I had hit the tree."

He laid there for a second. He tried to get up. He couldn't move.

"I thought I was paralyzed. I looked at my right leg and lifted it up. It felt real light, like a fluid-filled sack. Nothing," he said. "That time I knew it was gone."

With his hands, Cook dragged himself more than 30 feet to the middle of the road where he hoped a passerby would see him and help. He lifted his left leg and what was remaining of the right as high as he could, to ward off shock.

How did he know what to do?

"Kinda like instinct, I guess," Cook said. He described his "knowing" as the combination of adrenaline and the fight to stay alive.

With his legs in the air, he kept himself alive.

A driver saw Cook and stopped. Cook repeatedly coaxed the man, stunned by the accident scene, to call for help.

Minutes later, a police officer arrived and placed a tourniquet on Cook to control bleeding. Rescuers found more than two liters of blood at the scene.

The paramedics arrived and secured ice from a local restaurant to preserve his amputated leg, and rushed him to the hospital.

The emergency medical technicians tried to keep him conscious. They loaded the young man in an ambulance. "That's the last thing I remembered," Cook said.

Transcripts of the 911-call were titled, "Three a.m. fatal accident," he explained. "I don't know if I died or what."

Transported to Riverside Medical Center in Newport News, Va., surgeons placed rods in his remaining leg, cleaned him up, and briefly placed him on a ventilator.

He woke up with his parents in the room. They drove the nine-hour trip from Franklin, Pa. to be by his side.

Cook was transferred to the trauma ward at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) for the first of an estimated 20 surgeries to date. He expects more—a bone grafting for his left leg.

He remains on the WRNMMC-medical campus, recovering in Tranquility Hall, Bldg. 62, with his mom, Diana. She helps him with day-to-day tasks.



PHOTO BY JAMIE PETROSKY

After losing his right leg in a 2015 motorcycle accident, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Cook has expressed his desire to get back on a motorcycle, where he would use a special prosthetic leg for a cruiser-style motorcycle.

"When I first got here [Bldg.62], I could hardly even move. I had an electronic wheelchair with a joystick and it was hard for me to just transfer to [it]; I couldn't move around at all," Cook said. Diana brought food to him in bed, and set out his clothes.

"There's no way I would've been able to do it without her," he added. "Mentally, it's kind of a huge thing, not just physical. I have someone here. I'm not alone."

Nine months later, Cook plans to complete this portion of his recovery at WRNMMC. He continues to progress with his prosthetic leg: first using crutches, and today without.

"It just feels good to stand," he said, now a 23-year-old Air Force staff sergeant.

Will he ever ride again?

"Hell, yeah. I want to get back on a bike," he said. Maybe [I'll] switch from a sport bike to a cruiser-style instead. "They make a special [prosthetic] leg for it."

His advice to other service members who enjoy riding motorcycles: know where you're riding; don't travel on any roads you don't know; and always be weary of obstacles ahead.

"Most accidents occur because of failure to interpret the turn," Cook said.

Cook explained the accident has increased his faith, he prays more; he has more gratitude.

"I'm really thankful that I had all the schools and churches praying for me," he said. He believes those prayers played a big factor in his recovery.

Cook said he knows people are still praying for him. He's grateful for those prayers.

Cook hopes to meet the passerby that helped him that fateful morning. "So I can thank him," he said.

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DRIVING

from pg. 13

approximately six months prior to receiving my first vehicle, and again for another month while designing my truck that has a different adaptive driving system installed," Klein explained.

Following his injuries, driving was one of the first tasks Klein said he tackled requiring "significant cognitive processing and multitasking."

"Driving really helped me understand what I was capable of," he said.

He added that the ability to drive has enabled him to move off base and live with his dogs again. "I drive to the hospital every day for rehab and therapy."

"The adaptive driving program gave me my first taste of independence and normalcy following my injury," Klein continued. "The ability to drive and perform normal activities of daily living led directly to my current level of confidence and independence. The challenges of driving inspired me to keep challenging the assumptions of my disability and continue to get better every day."

"It's your independence back," Graham said. He added that Phipps "bends over backwards" for her service members and their families in the driving rehab program. "It is way more than a job for her; she goes above and beyond."

Army National Guard Capt. Timothy Neild began working with Phipps about a year ago after being seriously injured in a 2013 vehicle accident in New York. He endured burns that cost him parts of three fingers on his right hand, and both his ankles were broken.

"I was starting to drive [after the accident] before I was ready," Neild admitted. "I bounced between civilian hospitals before coming to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center." He explained if he had continued going to civilian hospitals, he would have had to drive himself to all of his appointments.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Jesse Graham and Tammy Phipps, occupational therapist and driving rehabilitation program director at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, discuss mechanisms on his truck that allowed him to get back behind the wheel and on the road following his 2014 snowboard accident.

"I had just learned to walk and I didn't have any hand controls. I wasn't ready to drive comfortably," Neild said.

"Driving rehabilitation was critical to my recovery because it allowed me to try numerous adaptive equipment options, and gave me the opportunity to select the option that was most comfortable and fitted for my needs," said the captain.

"Tammy allowed me to use my engineering abilities to work with the WRNMMC's 3D Medical Applications Center and create a custom steering wheel spinner knob. Dr. Peter Liacouras, director of services at the 3D Medical Applications Center, worked with me to establish a design process for my spinner knob. This whole experience was extremely uplifting for me, allowing me to exercise my engineering background and take charge of my recovery plan," Neild said.

"I am very proud of the work we did as a team and

extremely pleased with the expertise in my custom spinner knob," Neild added. "We are even going to utilize this same process to develop a custom aperture for another person who has no use of their legs and limited use of their hands."

"This stuff makes me feel that Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is one of the top facilities for rehabilitation in the world," Neild continued. "I can depend on myself instead of others. I get to go home to see my family a lot more," said the New York native. He added that working with Phipps has been "phenomenal."

Another wounded warrior whom Phipps currently works with is U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Caleb Getscher. The Maryland native received an adapted van from a non-profit group in September.

In 2011, the 24-year-old Marine lost his legs and left arm below the elbow to an improvised explosive device blast while deployed in Afghanistan.

As with all service members she works with, Phipps is assisting Getscher with a treatment plan, including the administrative paperwork to get him driving. "I hope to gain my independence and the ability to go where I need to go," said the Marine.

Army Col. Matthew St. Laurent, chief of occupational therapy at WRNMMC, has worked with Phipps since she began the program at the former WRAMC.

"The fact that WRNMMC even provides its patients with a driving evaluation and rehab is by itself extraordinary," said St. Laurent. "WRNMMC's driving rehab program is the only comprehensive driving assessment and rehab program in the DoD. No other military treatment facility provides behind the wheel assessment and rehab by a DoD clinical provider, which is the most efficient way to evaluate and treat a patient's driving abilities," St. Laurent said.

He added one of the first questions patients who have sustained significant injury or illness ask is, "Will I ever be able to drive again?" Driving is a way of life, an activity that allows us to be fully independent to participate in community life activities."

"The goal for our service members is that they drive, not just learn how to drive," Phipps added.



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